

MINUTES

Work Session Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

February 25, 2021

Board members in attendance were: John Reiter, Kelvin Pettit, Elaine Meil, Charles Kolakowski, and Mike Mason

ESVBA management participating in the meeting who were in attendance: Robert Bridgham and Leah Hoopes (Secretary)

Members of the public attending were:

Mr. Meil called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Mr. Reiter moved to amend the agenda to add 5b for "Hookups". After discussion, Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Rate Hearing-** There is no public comment
Mr. Mason motioned to close the Public Hearing. Mr. Reiter seconded. Motion passed unopposed.
Mr. Reiter motioned to adopt the rates as advertised. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.
- b. **Staff Salary Budget-** Mr. Bridgham explained that the FY21 budget included a 3% raise for employees, which was not approved previously.
Mr. Mason supports the initiative since the Authority has substantially increased the number of residential hookups, public WiFi hotspots, and miles built.
Mr. Reiter moved to authorize approval of staff salary budget. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **FY21 budget amendments-** Mr. Bridgham presented the budget amendments to the board. Mr. Reiter asked if item 3 covers internal engineering or engineering that has already been completed. Mr. Bridgham replied that the amount is based off of the ESVBA completing the engineering internally and it would take about a month and a half to complete. Mr. Mason explained that the Authority can complete the engineering but can't go much further without a grant or additional funds. *Mr. Kolakowski motioned to approve the budget amendments. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.*
- b. **Consider authorization to enter into agreements with counties for county-funded projects-**
Mr. Reiter asked if the funding has a completion dead line. Mr. Bridgham replied that there is no date set. Mr. Kolakowski stated that it has to be completed by the end of the year for Northampton County. Mr. Mason stated that Accomack does not have a dead line. Mr. Reiter asked if the Authority can complete the Northampton portion by the end of the year. Mr. Bridgham replied yes. Ms. Meil asked how much underground is involved in the Northampton County project. Mr. Bridgham estimated a total of about 5 miles of underground for Northampton. *Mr. Reiter moved to authorize Robert Bridgham to enter into Memorandums of Understanding with the counties regarding building the projects that they requested. Mr. Pettit seconded. Motion passed unopposed.*

WORK SESSION

- a. **Discuss remaining funds from bond proceeds-** Mr. Bridgham suggested authorizing some of the additional segments. Mr. Kolakowski asked if any of the projects line up with the ones that are already authorized. Mr. Bridgham explained that the segments are aerial and aerial deployments are easier to complete. Mr. Mason asked if the total cost of the sections would utilize all of the remaining funds. Mr. Bridgham replied that with the engineering, it would be very close.

Ms. Meil asked if any other broadband authorities are getting geared up to apply for VATI grants.

Mr. Bridgham stated that Roanoke Valley will be applying and a couple others are interested. There will be a call with all the authorities in March. Ms. Meil explained that they should have some answers on what would happen with Virginia's budget before they might get spent funds that they would need later on.

Mr. Mason motioned that the discussion gets tabled until the next meeting.

Mr. Kolakowski seconded. After discussion, motion passed unopposed.

- b. Hookups-** Mr. Reiter stated that as of today, it will take about 3 years to reach the expected 30% of hookups.

Mr. Bridgham explained that the underground jobs have held most of the installs up but more customers are requesting aerial. The authority now has underground contractors and there will be a future IFB that will be split up into sections that contractors can bid on.

Mr. Reiter asked about the Authority doubling its capacity.

BOARD COMMENT

Mr. Mason asked for an update on Tangier.

Mr. Bridgham stated that they received the Tower Agreement and payment has been made for the installation of the cabinet. He estimates that sometime in March the ESVBA will start to place cable.

Mr. Reiter proposed that the board have a Work Session in April to discuss getting broadband to the remainder of the shore.

Ms. Meil would like to commend the counties for putting the resources into broadband.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 pm.

These minutes were approved at the March 25, 2021 meeting of the Board of Directors of ESVBA.

Elaine K. Meil

Presiding Officer

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Leah Hoopes
Leah Hoopes, Secretary